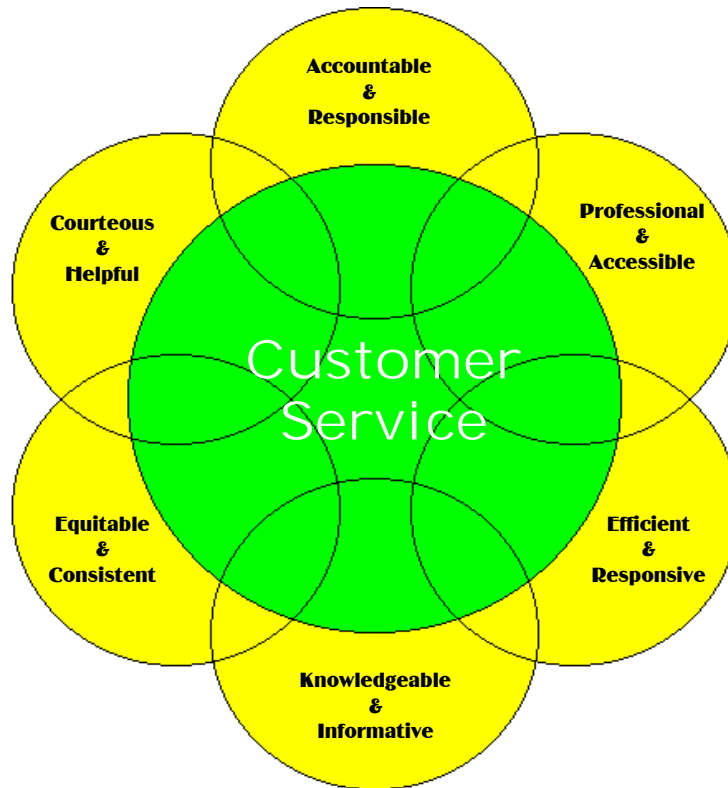


Customer Service Plan 2002



***A Commitment to Service Through
Wildlife and Fisheries Management***

Customer Service Committee
Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

October 2001

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Appreciation is extended to the members and advisor of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries *Customer Service Committee* for their efforts and ideas in the development of the Customer Service Plan and the Customer Service Employee Action Plan. Special recognition is conferred upon Undersecretary James L. Patton, Chairman of the Committee and David Lavergne, Economist Manager for their wisdom and guidance in preparing this report. Appreciation is specifically extended to Steven J. Welch, Economic Research Analyst, Socioeconomic Research and Development Section, Office of Management and Finance for compiling and preparing the Department's Customer Service Plan and the Customer Service Employee Action Plan.

The Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries follows a non-discriminatory policy in programs and employment.

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LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

CUSTOMER SERVICE PLAN 2002

Introduction

The goal of the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Customer Service Plan is to ensure the delivery of effective, efficient and responsive customer service of the highest quality. To accomplish this goal, the Department will:

- ! *Identify key customer services,*
- ! *Provide training for its employees,*
- ! *Research new ways to provide better overall customer services,*
- ! *Prominently display minimum expected customer service standards,*
- ! *Find bench marking partners and*
- ! *Continually seek feedback from customers and employees to identify changes necessary to meet customer needs and expectations.*

Individuals and entities who receive services, use products or resources managed by the Department or whose success or satisfaction in some way depends upon the actions of the Department are the Department's **customers**. Some examples of these customers are: commercial and recreational fishers, processors, wholesale and retail dealers, hunters, land owners or lessors, owners or lessors of private water bodies (i.e., ponds, lakes, etc.), seismic companies, boaters, campers, bird watchers, hikers, wildlife photographers, educators, school children, consumers of wildlife and fish products, and other groups from the general public.

In addition to customers, Department employees also have contact with **stakeholders**. Stakeholders are individuals or entities who have a vested interest in the Department or its activities, but they may not necessarily use the products or resources or receive the services of the Department, such as vendors, conservation groups, legislators, etc. **Stakeholders are not addressed in this Customer Service Plan, but are recognized as performing an important role in helping the Department accomplish its goals.** This Customer Service Plan was developed in

accordance with the procedures and guidelines outlined in Executive Order No. MJF 97-39 (Appendix). The Plan has been prepared by the *Customer Service Committee* as a cooperative and coordinated project involving all levels of the staff from all of the Offices and various managerial units within the Department.

Key Customer Services

Key services provided by the Department to its customers include:

- ! *Managing, conserving, promoting and protecting resources*
- ! *Replenishing, fortifying and enhancing renewable resources*
- ! *Researching to improve methods of resource management*
- ! *Authorizing use of resources*
- ! *Registering and inspecting water crafts*
- ! *Sponsoring and conducting educational programs*
- ! *Conducting compliance patrols and inspections*
- ! *Investigating boating accidents and marine thefts*
- ! *Conducting search and rescue activities*
- ! *Performing business audits, inspections and investigations*
- ! *Providing technical assistance*
- ! *Making resources accessible*
- ! *Responding to inquiries*
- ! *Disseminating information*
- ! *Promoting safe enjoyment of outdoor activities*
- ! *Publicizing departmental employment opportunities*

Customer Service Standards

Customer Service Standards describe and set the standard of quality for services the Department provides to its customers. Customers have **expectations** based on the amount and quality of service they receive from other public and private agencies and organizations. Providing resources, services, and information constitutes only a portion of what customers expect from the Department. They also expect that:

- ! *They will be treated with courtesy,*
- ! *Their questions will be addressed promptly,*
- ! *The answers they receive to their questions will be communicated to them in a clear, understandable manner,*
- ! *The atmosphere and environment where they receive services will be pleasant and safe,*
- ! *The services, products and resources they are seeking will be accessible and*
- ! *They will have a variety of choices (whenever possible).*

When these characteristics are incorporated into an employee–customer relationship, they define the **quality of service** delivered.

The State Customer Service Standard is to provide “effective, efficient and responsive customer service that is of the highest quality.” Accordingly, the Department has developed the following list of **Customer Service Standards** to which all employees must adhere. These standards are prominently posted at locations where Key Customer Services are provided so that employees will be reminded of the kind of service that they are expected to deliver. Additionally, all administrators are encouraged to add standards specific to their particular office, division or section.

- ! *We will always treat our customers with courtesy and respect.*
- ! *We will provide our customers with information that is current and accurate. If unsure, our staff will find a more knowledgeable person to assist.*
- ! *We will work continually to streamline and improve our services.*
- ! *We will make every effort to communicate with our customers in a clear, understandable*

manner.

- ! *We will maintain a neat appearance and a positive attitude.*
- ! *We will respond promptly to all inquiries, requests, suggestions and complaints. Every effort will be made to provide a complete and accurate response.*
- ! *We will provide fair and consistent treatment to all customers.*
- ! *We will encourage feedback and actively listen to our customers so that we may better understand their motivations and how to best provide products, services and information.*

Soliciting Information from Customers and Employees

The Department solicits information from customers and employees using a variety of methods. Customers are provided with several ways to communicate their needs and expectations, offer comments for improvement and express their overall satisfaction with the Department. These include:

- ! *Having public forums where comments and suggestions are encouraged (These occur at the monthly Commission meetings and other statewide meetings held throughout the year.),*
- ! *Periodically conducting surveys of randomly selected customers,*
- ! *Placing a suggestion box near the entrance to many building locations where customers receive services,*
- ! *Placing customer service comment cards at customer service counters, information desks and other visible locations and*
- ! *Providing an area on the Department's Internet web page for customers to record complaints, suggestions and requests for information on any topics or services provided.*

Employees are solicited and provided opportunities to give feedback to administrators. Comments from employees are heard, documented and passed up the chain of command. Employees and volunteers that deal directly with the public are an invaluable source of ideas on how to improve efficiency and quality of services. Through interaction with customers, employees and volunteers receive feedback in the form of compliments, complaints and/or suggestions based on the customers' needs and expectations.

Methods used to solicit employee comments for improving customer services include:

- ! *Providing an area for comments on the Department's internal web page,*
- ! *Setting aside time during staff and periodic program review meetings to discuss employees' ideas and receive comments on customer service issues and*
- ! *Periodically conducting employee surveys.*

It will always be optional to record name, address and telephone number on comment cards, electronic messages from the web page and other survey instruments. However, the Department encourages customers and employees to identify themselves so that a written response can be made. Customer and employee surveys will be conducted periodically by the Department provided that funds are available for this purpose.

Customer and employee input provides a solid basis for setting and revising Customer Service Standards. The renowned quality expert W. Edwards Deming once said, "What gets measured gets done." In an effort not only to maintain, but improve the quality of customer service at the Department, these Customer Service Standards are published, posted and tracked. Customer satisfaction may be used as a primary criterion when judging the performance of an office, division or section and when judging the effectiveness of management. It may also be used as a tool when making resource allocation decisions.

Addressing and Tracking Customer Complaints

Front-line employees should always try to answer customer complaints in a clear, courteous and easy to understand manner and be fully responsive to customer concerns and needs regarding the Department's services. If an employee is unable to satisfactorily handle a customer's complaint, he or she will direct the customer to the appropriate party for resolution or redress. The Department recognizes that not all customer complaints may be satisfied since it operates under rules and regulations that are governed by law.

Each complaint will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. All customer complaints received by the Department's customer service program will be recorded, reviewed, categorized and maintained on file by a designated *Customer Service Committee* representative. This is so that timely follow-up contact can be made to determine if the complaint was resolved as well as to aid in generating the annual *Customer Service Assessment Report*. If a complaint has merit, the administrator or supervisor-in-charge will discuss the complaint with staff to determine ways to alleviate or avoid future complaints.

The *Customer Service Assessment Report* will:

- ! *Provide an objective measurement of overall customer satisfaction for the entire Department.*
- ! *Summarize the number of comments, suggestions, and complaints received by type.*
- ! *Summarize all comments received by whether or not they have merit.*
- ! *Provide information concerning steps that can be taken to alleviate or avoid complaints that have merit as well as suggest ways to improve customer service.*

The *Customer Service Assessment Report* and information collected from comment cards, electronic messages and surveys of customers and employees will provide the necessary information to adjust services to meet the needs and expectations of the Department's customers. This information will also allow the Department to measure and compare overall customer satisfaction with other private and public agencies or organizations.

Comparing Results

The Department's customer satisfaction survey rating results will be compared to other public and private agencies or organizations that perform the same or similar activities or services. Customer satisfaction ratings will be posted and published on the Department's web site, in customer service areas, in annual performance reports and other department publications. A copy of the customer service plan will be obtained from any agency or organization that has a higher customer service rating or reputation. These plans will be reviewed to see if any of the policies, procedures or standards may be applied to improve the Department's customer service rating. Several possible public agencies with which the Department may be compared to are listed below.

Federal:

U.S. Forest Service
U.S. Geological Survey
U.S. Department of the Treasury
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Department of the Interior - Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
National Marine Fishery Service
U.S. Coast Guard
National Resource Conservation Services

State (Louisiana):

Department of Agriculture and Forestry
Department of Environmental Quality (Air and Water Permitting Section)
Department of Natural Resources
Department of Revenue

Office of State Police
Office of State Parks
Office of Motor Vehicles

Other States:

Wildlife and Fishery Agencies

Dissemination of Customer Service Information

Customer service information is disseminated by all Offices using various communication media. The Information Section provides assistance and support in developing, producing and distributing information to customers using various printed, video, audio and personal communication methods. Offices are encouraged to include education and dissemination of information to the public as part of employee job duties and responsibilities. For example, the enforcement division has a public information officer at headquarters and regional information specialists that provide information to the media.

Procedures and Time Line for Reporting Customer Service Results

The Department will maintain a *Customer Service Committee* composed of employees from each Office and various other managerial units, headed by the Undersecretary or his or her designee. At the beginning of each calendar year, the Committee, through the various offices, divisions and sections, will implement an annual customer service assessment program that will elicit information from customers and employees for the *Customer Service Assessment Report* and the *Customer Service Plan*.

Each Office, Division or Section will submit a summary of customer service for its respective departmental entity to the *Customer Service Committee* no later than the first day of September of each year. The *Customer Service Committee* will develop, conduct and analyze or contract an outside source to assist in developing, conducting and analyzing customer and employee

surveys. These surveys will identify the needs and expectations, measure satisfaction levels and solicit comments and suggestions for improving services and operations. The Committee or contractor will compare survey results with other private and public agencies providing similar services and with baseline information from previous surveys. Information from the customer and employee surveys and the *Customer Service Assessment Report* will be used in the *Customer Service Plan* to be submitted to the Office of the Governor through the Commissioner of Administration by the first day of November of each year.

Appendix

EXECUTIVE ORDER MJF 97-39

State Customer Service Standard

WHEREAS: it is the duty of the State of Louisiana to timely deliver government customer services that are of the highest quality and responsive to the public's needs;

WHEREAS: the State of Louisiana intends to achieve higher levels of citizen satisfaction by delivering quality, timely, and responsive government services which meet its customer service obligations;

WHEREAS: to enable the State of Louisiana to meet its goal of providing a superior level of customer service, all levels of state government employees could benefit from a statewide employee customer service training program that identifies customer expectations and assists state government employees in satisfying those expectations;

NOW THEREFORE I, M.J. "MIKE" FOSTER, JR., Governor of the State of Louisiana, by virtue of the authority vested by the Constitution and laws of the State of Louisiana, do hereby order and direct as follows:

SECTION 1: State Customer Service Standard. All departments and agencies in the Executive Branch, State of Louisiana, and all officers and employees thereof (hereafter "state agencies") shall strive to deliver to the individuals and entities they serve effective, efficient, and responsive customer service that is of the highest quality.

SECTION 2: Implementation of Standard. In implementing the state customer service standard, all state agencies that serve the public directly shall perform the following nonexclusive list of duties:

- A. identify all of the services provided by the state agency;
- B. identify the customers who are, and should be, served by the state agency;
- C. determine the service expectations of those customers;
- D. determine the present level of satisfaction those customers have with the services of the state agency;
- E. compare the state agency's present customer service performance to the level of customer service presently being delivered to customers by other governmental and/or nongovernmental entities that are models of successful customer service;

- F. disseminate customer service information to the public and make available a user-friendly customer service improvement system; and
- G. develop an internal structure that effectively addresses customer complaints and prevents future customer service dissatisfaction.

SECTION 3: Support for State Government Employees. Each state agency shall work with its employees to develop a state employee plan that will compliment the state agency's customer service strategy. Each plan shall describe the customer service training resources and programs being provided by the state agency for its employees who are directly serving customers and for the managers of those employees. The plan should identify the types of training resources and programs that would improve the state agency's customer service levels, indicate how those training resources and programs would improve the level of the state agency's customer service, and provide a strategy which indicates how those training resources and programs will be provided. The state employee plan shall also include the following information:

- A. a detailed explanation of employee expectations and needs regarding the manner in which the state customer service standard is implemented;
- B. a detailed list of employee ideas for improving the level of customer satisfaction and attaining the state customer service standard; and
- C. indicate types of customer service training that is necessary to provide employees with the essential tools to deliver goods and services at the level that meets customer service standard.

SECTION 4: Annual Customer Service Plan. Beginning with the fiscal year commencing July 1, 1998, each state agency shall implement an annual customer service plan. The state agency shall develop its initial plan and submit it to the Office of the Governor, through the commissioner of Administration, by November 1, 1998. The state agency shall develop and submit an annual update by November 1 of each successive year.

The state agency's annual customer service plan shall include the state agency's customer service goals for complying with the state customer service standard that is specifically tailored to the particular service provided by the state agency. Each plan shall identify and describe the level of customer service being delivered to customers by relevant, successful governmental or nongovernmental agencies, and present a comparative evaluation of the difference in quality of the customer service provided by the state agency and by relevant, successful governmental or nongovernmental agencies. If the level of quality of the state agency's customer service is not equivalent to, or better than, the level of the relevant, successful governmental or nongovernmental agency customer service, the state agency shall explain the reason for the disparity in the customer service quality, and the action being taken to rectify the situation.

SECTION 5: Annual Customer Service Assessment. Beginning with December 1998, at the

end of every calendar year, each state agency shall implement an annual customer service assessment that elicits from customers and employees information regarding:

- A. changes in customer needs and expectations;
- B. the level of overall customer satisfaction with the state agency's service; and
- C. suggestions for improvement. This information shall be used by the state agency in measuring its overall performance level, the effectiveness of its leadership, and in allocating its resources.

SECTION 6: Miscellaneous Provisions. This Order shall not and does not create any right of action, any cause of action, or any substantive, procedural, or equitable right enforceable by, or in favor of, any person or entity against the State of Louisiana or any department, commission, board, agency, political subdivision, or officer or employee thereof.

All departments, commissions, boards, agencies, and officers of the state, or any political subdivision thereof, are authorized and directed to cooperate with the implementation of the provisions of this Order.

This Order is effective upon signature and shall continue in effect until amended, modified, terminated, or rescinded by the Governor, or terminated by operation of law.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have set my hand officially and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of Louisiana, at the Capitol, in the City of Baton Rouge, on this 23rd of September, 1997.

M.J. "Mike" Foster, Jr.
Governor

ATTEST BY
THE GOVERNOR
Fox McKeithen
Secretary of the State